



ONTARIO DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

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INTERIM REVISION MUSIC

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INTERIM REVISION MUSIC

The musical culture of a country is not made by some musicians but by the whole people. Everybody has a hand in it, down to the very young.

Kodaly

Music has long been recognized as a vital part of education. In the school program the underlying aim is to enable children to enjoy good music in school and for the rest of their lives. In acquiring a love of music, students will become familiar with great works and, in the process, they will come to appreciate both the theory and the technique. They will develop discriminating taste that may ultimately help to produce a lively cultural life in the nation as a whole and enable them to make enjoyable and profitable use of their increased leisure time in a world of automation.

Many schools have specially trained music supervisors but the classroom program is largely carried on by the classroom teacher. In order to enable them to provide a rich program for the children, the Department of Education offers Summer Courses. The Ontario Music Educators' Association conducts workshops throughout the school year.

THE PROGRAM

Music, to become part of the child's way of life, should be part of the whole school day. Recorded music could be playing as children come into school as they arrive in the morning. During the day, the teacher will find that it fits into a number of study areas. Music is essential to many activities of the Physical Education Program. It can enhance the free expression in Art when used as background and may be used as an introduction or application to the study of a poem. In carrying out individual or group projects, the children may choose to express themselves through music.

The music program may include instrumental and vocal music but the vocal part will come first and should predominate. In Ontario the tonic sol-fa system is commonly used.

SINGING

Children will learn rote songs as often and as soon as possible. The emphasis in singing should be on the child's own enjoyment. With very young children, the first songs which are learned will deal with themes within the child's own experience—home, pets, nursery rhymes, or the guardians of safety and good health in his own community, such as policemen and doctors.

Subjects of this kind are particularly successful if they are set to tunes that are short, appealing and rhythmical. They should also fall within the child's voice range which is usually from middle E flat to the upper E flat.

As the children become ready for more complicated songs, the teacher may introduce folk songs from other lands, or rounds, two-and-three-part songs, two-part scales, two-part sequentials, and some minor keys.

The teacher will be the best judge of how many songs her students can learn in a given year, but at least 40 songs would be a realistic aim in the primary grades. More than 40 would be learned by the children in the Junior Division.

One problem all music teachers face is the child who sings out of tune. Generally speaking, a little extra attention in the early years will correct this fault. The teacher, herself, can generally tell just when the child is most receptive and will wait until he is anxious to improve his singing in order to join with his classmates more tunefully.

At first, the child will learn all songs by rote. Even then, however, the teacher should keep the staff in mind. She can even include some informal explanation of staff notation as the opportunity presents itself.

As soon as the child is ready, the teacher should introduce sight singing. He will learn to read music gradually, starting with written music for songs that he already knows. But the songs he learns will become more complicated as he progresses. The teacher will use the songs the children are learning to introduce the technicalities of notation, always explaining the terminology as an aid to musical enjoyment rather than as an end in itself. In this way, some children in the Junior Division may reach the point where they are accustomed to key signatures up to four sharps and four flats and be familiar with such terms as sharpened fourth and flattened seventh.

Some children may need special practice in scale tone groups and intervals but this can be an enjoyable experience if they consider such drill as an aid to learning a particularly pleasing song.

From the time he starts to read music, the child should constantly learn more and more about sight reading—which will, in the end, set him free in the land of music, as word skills do in literature. The teacher may present sight reading as a game or as the introduction of a new song. However she does it, she should make sure that practice is gradual, informal, regular, and always enjoyable.

Some teachers will also devise games or encourage children to devise games that develop intonation: matching notes, tests on loudness, pitch and quality, and tests of rhythm and memory.

Many teachers use the modulator. Electronic devices now are available as an improvement.

RHYTHMIC ACTIVITIES

Children are naturally fond of music to which they can respond with their whole beings. It is natural for a child to move his body in time to music and with a little encouragement he will translate this into a dance. The teacher might suggest that he pretend he is a bunny hopping, a fire engine speeding, or three bears taking a walk—depending on the music. He will soon be walking, marching, swaying, jumping, rocking, or gliding in time to the music. The child can learn note values through bodily movement more easily than through hours of verbal explanation.

LISTENING

Bodily movements as described in the last section lead naturally into the *Listening* part of the program, in which is developed a love for good music. The teacher can provide the child with a variety of recordings, both instrumental and vocal. She can intersperse such periods throughout the school day and integrate them with other subjects.

The teacher may also use recorded music to establish a mood that she wants to set—for instance, a child coming inside after a boisterous game on the playground may respond to the sound of soothing music playing in the classroom. After a period of concentration, he may find lively music a pleasant release.

As the child nears the end of the Junior Division, he should hear music that illustrates the variations of time, mood, colour, and rhythm. He does not need to use terms like *legato*, *andante*, or *allegro*, but he may well understand them. As children begin to identify form in music, they will, with encouragement, recognize the repetition of patterns and phrases in simple songs or instrumental selections.

They will also learn to recognize different musical instruments and their sounds. This can lead gradually to the instrumental part of the music course.

SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES

- Simple rhythm bands offer the children musical experience and they also develop cooperation within a group.
- Action songs, singing games, and folk dances encourage a natural tendency to become part of the music.
- Music festivals may provide an opportunity for extending the school program. Students are usually enthusiastic participants and support the entries of their classmates. This enthusiasm may provide increased activity in the school music program.

INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC

Although the music course in the Primary and Junior Divisions is largely vocal, many children are ready for the first steps in instrumental music. Individual children with musical ability or interest may be identified and provision made for their development. Children will find it natural to progress from listening to recorded instrumental selections, to learning about standard band instruments, and in a growing number of schools, to playing stringed instruments for themselves.

Small children must have orchestral instruments scaled down to their own size. This presents a problem in many schools but it is one that can be overcome. The development of string technique in the Primary Division is unlimited as far as the children are concerned. From a practical standpoint, however, progress can be limited by the number of instruments available and by the ability of the teacher.

NOTE: The recordings listed in the departmental circular *Music Appreciation Through Listening for Elementary Schools* are no longer available. New courses of study, based on the conclusions of the Committee on Aims and Objectives of Education, will include special attention to music appreciation.

